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THE LYRICS OF ELIZA

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"I pass my days in fair content
Engaged in meditation;"

The LYRICS OF ELIZA

Interpreted by
D·K·Stevens
author of
"Lays of a Lazy Dog"

Illustrated by
Katharine
Maynadier
Browne

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1911

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L. E. BASSETT
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Some Lyric Gems within you'll find,
(A copyrighted version),
Which I inscribe to all my kind —
Angora, Coon and Persian.

And to my humbler friends as well,
(To slight them would be shabby),
The Maltese and the Tortoise-shell,
The common Tom and Tabby.

ELIZA EXPLAINS

I'm not a candidate for Fame,
I have no wish to win a name
Or make a public stir;
Toward comfort my ambition runs,
My tastes are all domestic ones —
Yes, indeed — *purr-r-r-r*.

But there are certain small events
And unrecorded incidents
To which I might refer,
As well as sundry points of view
Which I consider rather new —
Yes, indeed — *purr-r-r-r*.

So, laying prejudice aside,
To "state the simple facts" I've tried,
And, though I'd much prefer
To leave it for some abler pen,
This chance may not occur again—
No, indeed—*purr-r-r-r.*

INTRODUCES HERSELF

I never was a stickler for
Mere empty demonstration,
And ceremony I abhor
As shallow ostentation;
So I informally proclaim
Eliza as my given name.

Tradition, I would have it known,
In my case has miscarried;
No spinster claims me as her own —
Our family is married,
And, named in our domestic log,
Are several children and a dog.

The dog, whose silly name is *Gip*,
I tolerate austerely ;
He's just a common little snip,
Of Scotch extraction clearly.
He learned quite early in the game
That *certain* cats are not the same.

I pass my days in fair content
Engaged in meditation ;
Partake of timely nourishment
In seemly moderation.
At night I sleep, from conflict free —
The *alley* has no charm for me.

This outline, sketchy though it be,
Without equivocation,
Will serve as introducing me
To your consideration.
(I've not portrayed the outer cat —
The artist will attend to that).

ON PERSONAL ADORNMENT

Some cats, I find,
Are much inclined
To hold in condemnation
All ornament
Worn with intent
To kindle admiration.

The ribbon bow
These critics show
To be most meretricious,
And collars they
Pretend to say
Are little short of vicious.

I notice that
The kind of cat
Most loud in this objection
Is not endued
With pulchritude
Which will endure inspection.

For me, indeed
I scarcely need
Adornment vain
and flaunty;
But bows of blue
Or some bright hue
Are most distinctly
jaunty.

ON CATCHING MICE

Having hinted that tradition
In my case has failed to act,
I will say in exposition
Of this interesting fact,
That old notions are receding,
Some there are quite out of date,
Which no modern cat of breeding
Need feel bound to emulate.

Take, for instance, that impression,
Or belief, to be precise,
That the household cat's profession
Is the art of catching mice.
There is really nothing to it —
The idea is obsolete,
For no well-bred cat will do it
Who has proper food to eat.

That in youth I did pursue them
It were idle to deny,
And undoubtedly I slew them,
Callow pride to gratify.
But with years my taste grew finer,
Now my meals, I'm proud to say,
All are served on Canton china
With a menu *recherche*.

THE AFFAIR WITH TEDDY

I've seen a garbled and quite misleading
Account by him in his book of *Lays,*
In which he attempts, but without succeeding,
To injure me in the public gaze.
The signal weakness of his position
That exhibition
Of course betrays.

This *Teddy* creature had often worried
Not only me but many a friend;
Because of him I was sometimes hurried
When haste was not my original end;
And such display of intent malignant,
Made me indignant,
You may depend.

I gave the matter consideration
To this conclusion, when all was done:
Pursuit involves a coördination —
There'll be no chase if I never run.
And so, by logic somewhat elated,
Sat down and waited,
Expecting fun.

Nor was I wrong in my premonition,
As he himself has recorded true;
And the fun derived from the expedition
Depends somewhat on the point of view.
With his ridiculous tail half-masted,
His purpose blasted,
The dog withdrew.

In his account, (which is *most* mendacious),
He strikes my name from his calling list,
And if that claim be at all veracious,
His crude attentions will not be missed.
In fact, as you have deduced already,
To me this *Teddy*
Does not exist!

SAMUEL

One member of our family
Is briefly known as *Sammy*,
Although he's quite as apt to be
Addressed as "Mummer's Lammie."
He's eight months old — a creeping thing
That gnaws a loathsome rubber ring
And rarely ceases but to yell —
I do not care for Samuel.

He has a most luxurious bed —
A thing to be resented;
The frequency with which he's fed
Is quite unprecedented.
And *special* milk it has to be!
A thing they never got for *me.*

My deep disgust I can't dispel —
I have no love for Samuel.

And if you'd know one reason why,
You won't go far to seek it :
He never lets a chance go by
To catch my tail and tweak it !
I may or may not, some fine day,
This grave indignity repay ;
One thing I know and know full well :—
I've got it in for Samuel.

To hear them talk you'd think, in sooth,
That Sammy is a wonder;
That when he cuts his primal tooth
The world will split asunder.
In him all marvels they can see,
But he does not impose on *me;*
In words addressed to Doctor Fell:—
I do not love thee, Samuel.

MODUS VIVENDI

Between me and the dog named *Gip*
Exists a certain fellowship
Supported by
The common tie
Of frivolous restriction
Which both regard as most unjust,
But tolerate because we must;
And so we've found
A neutral ground
Devoid of serious friction.

When, as a puppy, he became
Possessor of our family name,
I'm bound to say
His tactless way
To me was most distressing;
And so some useful lessons I
Administered as time went by,
Designed with care
To show just where
A joke becomes depressing.

He's older now and more discreet,
Our understanding is complete;
If there's but one
Warm spot of sun,
I've taught him to forsake it;
And when our dinner we discuss,
There is a half for each of us,
But if a doubt
Exists about
Some casual bit — I take it.

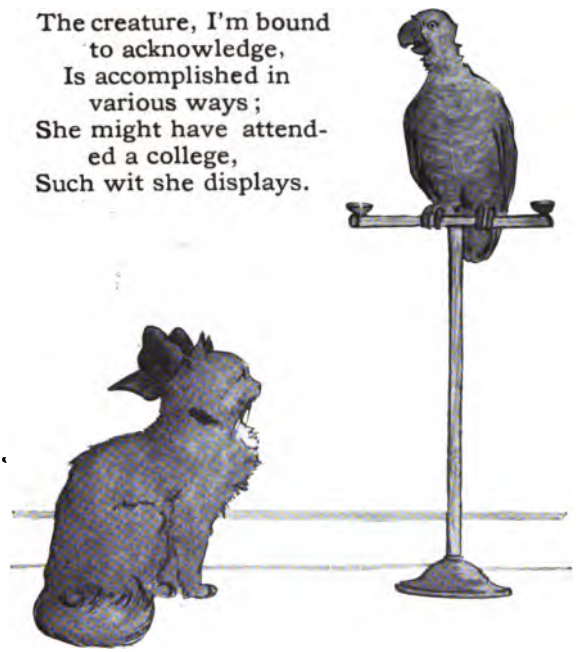
When feeling in a lighter vein
I have been able to sustain
A languid share
In some affair
A "rough-house," as he terms it;
But such diversions pave the way
To acrimonious display,
And words ensue;
That is *my* view —
Experience confirms it.

And so the situation is:
I live my life and he lives his.
The window seat
Is my retreat
And held to be exclusive;
And in return 'tis only fair
That he should have the wicker chair,
(Which I don't mind
Because I find
Its angles are obtrusive).

SUSANNAH

Attached in a casual manner
To the household, I'm sorry to say,
Is a parrot, by name of *Susannah,*
Whose color is gray.

The creature, I'm bound
to acknowledge,
Is accomplished in
various ways;
She might have attend-
ed a college,
Such wit she displays.



She gives a correct personation
Of *Gip* when he's cuffed on the ears,
And a perfectly *great* imitation
Of *Sammy* in tears.

These tricks have diverted me greatly,
But I find them less humorous now,
For I heard her, one afternoon lately,
Distinctly *mee-ow!*

A joke I'm as quick at enjoying
As the rest of the family are;
But I find it extremely annoying
If carried too far.

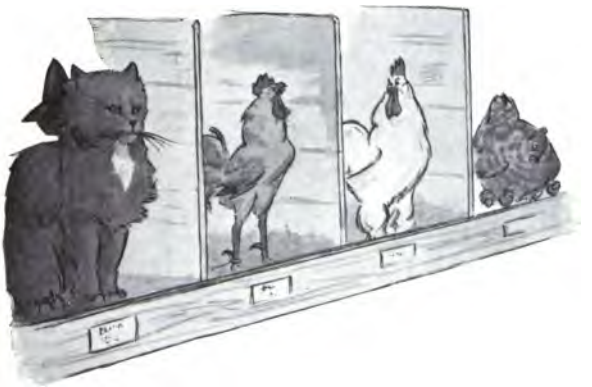
A BLOW TO DIGNITY

I hope I'm not unduly vain
Or what you'd call inflated.
But it would be absurd to feign
That I regard myself as plain
And over-estimated.

So I consented to attend
A Feline Exhibition;
For once decided to unbend
And go so far as to descend
To vulgar competition.

I went prepared to meet my kind
In friendly emulation,
Expecting, as of course, to find
Rare beauty with *haut ton* combined
In cats of ev'ry nation.

I will not dwell on that affair —
The memory of it sickens.
You'll understand when I declare
That, chief among exhibits there,
Were *roosters, hens and chickens!*



Although a ribbon fell to me,
I had no use for *that* show.
When next my face and form you see
On exhibition, it will be
Ex-*clu*-sively a *Cat* Show.

AFTERTHOUGHT

Adieu! With some relief I here
Resign the Lyre; and if, perchance,
Its strings I now and then have swept
Ungently, and have thus produced
A note that seems a trifle harsh,
Pray bear in mind that ev'ry cat,
Within those silken-velvet paws
Has sundry talons strangely keen
And most ill-fitted to evoke
The sweetest sounds from muted string.
With which explanatory word
My Lyrics go — as they occurred.

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